THE SCOTISH COLONY OF DARIEN.

THE isthmus of Darien extends in the form of a crescent between North America and South America, and is washed on one side by the Caribbean Sea and on the other by the Pacific Ocean. It lies within the tropics, and has a mountainous character, and measures about 800 miles in length and about 60 in breadth. It early became important to the Spaniards, in connexion with their transit traffic from Peru; it has been the scene of more great actions than almost any other district of equal extent on the American continent; and, toward the close of the 17th century, it was the brief seat of one of the most brilliant and disastrous efforts at

colonization which have ever occurred in the history of the Scotish people.

A Mr. Paterson, a Scotchman, of whose birth and early history nothing is known, but who appears to have been both well educated and very clever, went from Europe to the western world on a mission of some kind to the Red Indians, and soon began to feel a deep interest in the country and in its great commercial capabilities. He particularly frequented the isthmus of Darien; and there he got introduced to Captain Dampier and Mr. Wafer, the subsequent authors of intelligent books upon the country,—and cultivated the acquaintance of some of the old buccaneers, who, after surviving a long series of exploits, recounted with enthusiasm how easily they had passed and repassed from the one ocean to the other, sometimes in gangs of scores or hundreds, driving lines of mules before them laden with the plunder of friends and of foes. Paterson, after hearing their stories and examining the region for himself, became convinced that a tract of country extended quite across the isthmus which had never been possessed by the Spaniards, and was inhabited by a people continually at war with them; that along the coast, on the Atlantic side, there lay a string of islands, called the Samboloes, and one of them, the Isle of Pines, all uninhabited and full of natural strengths and forests; that the seas which washed the isthmus abounded with turtle and with the manatee or sea-cow; that midway between Portobello and Carthagena, but nearly 50 leagues distant from either, at a place called Acta, in the mouth of the river Darien, was a natural harbour, capable of accommodating the largest fleets, and defended from storms and from enemies by islands and rocks and high grounds which faced and flanked it; that on the Pacific side of the same tract of the isthmus, were other natural harbours, both capacious and strong; that a range of uplands extended from sea to sea of such height as to create a temperate climate in the midst of the sultry latitudes, and

of such moderate clothing with forests as to enjoy refreshing shade without being rendered chokingly damp; that the soil, to a great extent, was a rich black mould, two or three feet deep, spontaneously producing fine tropical roots and herbs and fruits; that roads might easily be made along the uplands sufficient to allow mules and even carriages to pass daily between the harbour on the Atlantic and the harbours on the Pacific; and that, therefore, this tract of country seemed to possess all the requisites of a commercial nexus between the great oceans of the two hemispheres,—to be, in fact, a ready-formed entrepot and focus for a very large portion of the trade and intercourse of the world.

Paterson saw gold in some parts of the isthmus, and might readily have found occasion to indulge in speculations respecting vast possible stores of mineral wealth; but he reflected on the far more important objects of abridging practical distances between the great countries of the earth, preserving the lives of seamen, economizing the costs and labours and time of international merchants, and facilitating the ordinary operations of one grand department of the world's wellbeing; and in order to achieve all this, he projected the formation upon the neutral territory in Darien of an intelligent and powerful colony, well founded on a wise and regular system, well supported by rich and manifold ramifications with European interests, and well protected by the special patronage and aid of some one European government. "The time and expense of navigation to China, Japan, the Spice Islands, and the far greatest part of the East Indies," said he in one of his communications on the subject, "will be lessened more than half, and the consumption of European commodities and manufactures will soon be more than doubled. Trade will increase trade, and money will beget money, and the trading world shall need no more to want work for their hands, but will rather want hands for their work. Thus this door of the seas, and the key of the

universe, with anything of a reasonable management, will, of course, enable its proprietors to give laws to both oceans, and to become arbitrators of the commercial world, without being liable to the fatigues, expenses, and dangers, or contracting the guilt and blood, of Alexander and Cæsar. In all our empires that have been anything universal, the conquerors have been obliged to seek out and court their conquests from afar; but the universal force and influence of this attractive magnet, is such as can much more effectually bring empire home to its proprietors' doors."

Paterson thought first to offer his project to England, supposing that she had most power to turn it to the general benefit of the world, and that she would gladly adopt it for sake of connecting the interests of her European, American, West-Indian, African, and East-Indian trade; and he went to London for the purpose of making it known; and, having but few friends there who could assist him, he attempted to draw notice and inspire confidence by forming a scheme for the creation of a national bank. But he found, as many a great projector has done both before and since, that the persons to whom he communicated his ideas took the honour of them to themselves, and ceased to be civil to him the instant they had got entire possession of his scheme; so that, while secretly conscious of being the originator of the Bank of England, he saw his services in that capacity to become rather a hindrance than a help to his ulterior project; and he therefore mentioned that project to only a few, and met nothing but discouragement. He now went to the Continent, and, with the aid of one Serrurier, a Walloon banker, who spoke all languages, and could accommodate himself to all men, he made offer of his project to the Dutch, the Hamburghers, and the Elector of Brandenburg. But the Dutch and the Hamburghers, who, next to the English, ought to have felt most interest in the subject of his visit, heard him with indifference; and though the Elector at first received

him with honour and kindness, he also was driven into indifference by court arts and false reports.

Paterson, though a Scotchman perhaps as much by patriotic attachment as by birth, probably would never have thought of his own country as a suitable patron of his project, but for the insults and rebuffs which he thus encountered in other lands. He knew Scotland to be too poor to furnish the requisite funds, and too uncommercial to work out or perhaps even to appreciate the promised advantages; but now he regarded her very poverty and prostration as an argument for acquainting her with his scheme, and for modifying or enlarging it into suitableness to her condition, so that she might rise by its means into rivalship with those saucy states who had become rich and supercilious by their successes in commerce. He therefore grafted upon his original project a plan for making Scotland the seat of a trade to Africa and the Indies, and for drawing to its aid the money and influence of such foreign merchants as had become jealous or resentful of the exclusive Indian Companies of England and Holland; and he was favoured at the very start with the vigorous partisanship of the well known Fletcher of Saltoun, whose acquaintance he had made in London, and who hated England and loved Scotland to excess, and eagerly looked out for anything which might bring benefit and fame to his country. Fletcher took Paterson with him to Scotland, presented him to the Marquis of Tweeddale, the minister of Scotland, and, with that power which a vehement spirit generally exerts over a diffident one, persuaded him, by arguments for the public good and by the honour which would redound to his administration, to adopt the project. Reasons of state also happened at the moment to be eminently and urgently favourable,—particularly the odium which hung over the whole court in connexion with the massacre of Glencoe, and the consequent necessity for some dazzling occurrence which might restore the Scotish nation to good humour and revive

the popularity of the King; and hence, as well perhaps as for some private reasons, the two secretaries of state, Lord Stair, and Mr. Johnston, and the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, gave their prompt and hearty support. The whole nation were in a sullen and excitable mood,—indignant at the seeming truculency of the court,—discontented at the constant efflux of money and enterprise toward London,—angry at the total absence among themselves of the wealth and aggrandizement which were rapidly accumulating among surrounding nations,—and relaxed and irritable under the recoil and subsidence of the animosities and persecutions and public broils which had so long kept them in feverish excitement; so that scarcely could they have been in a fitter trim for being suddenly and perfectly captivated with a great national proposal which should burst on them as a novelty, and promise them peace and riches and glory.

In June 1695 an act was passed by the Scotish parliament, creating a trading company to Africa and the new world, with power to plant colonies and build forts, under consent of the inhabitants, in places not possessed by other European nations; and a short while after, a charter to the same effect was granted by the Crown. Paterson now threw his project boldly upon the public, and opened a subscription for the special purpose of colonizing Darien; he issued glowing accounts of the territory, and wisely proposed to make it a free region, where no distinction of sect or party should prevail; and he was responded to, from all districts and by all classes in Scotland, with a warmth and outburst of enthusiasm, as great as had ever before distinguished any national movement. Multitudes of the population were smitten as with a mania, and began, in a wild and rapturous day-dream, to grasp at the riches of both of the Indies. The common people, the merchants, the gentry, the nobility, all the royal burghs, and most public bodies hastened to subscribe their name and credit. Young ladies threw their little fortunes

ill-advised in Scotland, but would hope to find some remedy to prevent the apprehended evils; and he immediately dismissed his Scotish ministers, and sent orders to his resident at Hamburgh to present a memorial to the senate of that city, disowning the new Company, and warning them against all connection with it. The English subscribers to the scheme were so intimidated by the proceedings of the parliament and the King, that they withdrew their subscriptions; and even the Dutch and the Hamburghers were so pusillanimous as to follow their example. Yet an assembly of Hamburgh merchants, to whom the senate of that city sent King William's memorial, displayed a spirit which ought to have animated all the foreign subscribers, and to have given a permanent rebuke to all undue interference on the part of kings and governments with commercial affairs. "We look upon it," said they, "as a very strange thing, that the King of Britain should offer to hinder us, who are a free people, to trade with whom we please; but are amazed to think, that he would hinder us from joining with his own subjects in Scotland, to whom he had lately given such large privileges, by so solemn an act of parliament."

The Scots felt rather animated than discouraged by the vigorous opposition made to them,—for they viewed it as a proof of the envy of the English, and of their conviction that great advantages would result to Scotland from the colony; and they proceeded, throughout a period of between two and three years, to make requisite preparations for their great enterprise. The Company built or purchased in Holland five frigates of from thirty-six to sixty guns; and fitted them out with military stores, great quantities of provisions, and large cargoes of merchandise; and engaged for them about twelve hundred colonists,—among whom were younger sons of many of the noble and most ancient families of Scotland, and sixty officers who had been disbanded at the peace, who carried with them retainers and male servants and followers,

drawn from their own estates or from those of their relations, and known to be faithful and brave. They also prospectively vested the government of the colony in an assembly and a counsel of seven, distinct from the Company; and reserved as their corporate or peculiar property a twentieth part of the lands, metals, precious stones, and pearl fisheries; and ordained that an annual payment of seven thousand pounds should be made for the use of the shipping and of the military stores.

As the preparations of the Company approached completion, they found themselves confronted with new and serious discouragements. They had tried to obtain redress for the defalcation of their English and foreign subscribers, and for the opposition of the English and Dutch East India Companies, but could not get any. All their resources were crippled by a general deficiency of the harvests in the preceding years, and by such a sore prevalence of famine throughout Scotland as cut off many families for want and drove many more to other countries in search of subsistence, and by the consequent draining and impoverishing of the national wealth in the exportation of large sums of money for grain. But, above all, the Company became increasingly embarrassed by the persevering and extending antagonism of the King and the English court. William was no doubt perplexed by the conflicting interests of the nations over whom he presided, and must have felt that any appearance of concession which he should make to the trade of Scotland would exasperate the English and the Dutch. But he also had great designs of policy, particularly the repression of the Bourbons and the partition of Spain, which required him to study for a time the good humour of the great Continental powers, and were inconsistent with his giving any countenance to the colonization of Darien; for in order to prevent the succession of the Bourbons to the whole of the Spanish monarchy, he had concerted with Louis a partition treaty in such terms, that

the Darien expedition might easily be construed by suspecting Spaniards into the first step towards its execution, and by suspecting Frenchmen into a perfidious breach of its conditions. The Jacobites, moreover, had acquired the chief share and direction in the Darien Company; and they would naturally be suspected by William himself as not at all reluctant to render him odious to his other subjects, and to involve him prematurely in a rupture with Spain.

The Company, however, were not to be thwarted from their purpose by either misfortune or misrepresentation or hostility; and they went steadily forward in their preparations, and fortified themselves with whatever precautions and defences were in their power. "Nothing else," remarks one of our ablest historians, "than the national pride or honour, piqued and indignant at the opposition of the English, could have incited the Scots, under such multiplied discouragements, to persist in the scheme." And certainly they may have owed much to the resolution and fervour which are apt to be enkindled by just indignation; but they probably owed far more to the proverbial indomitableness of their national spirit, to the sinewy firmness of high moral decision, and to the inventive and sturdy heroism which becomes keen-eyed and energetic in the very proportion in which it is opposed. Their very English enemies in the end must have contemplated them fully more with involuntary reverence than with aversion; and—to adopt the words of another of our historians—"neighbouring nations, with a mixture of surprise and respect, saw the poorest kingdom of Europe sending forth the most gallant and the most numerous colony that had ever gone from the old to the new world."

In 1698, when the expedition was completely ready, and when every practicable provision had been made for it without possibility of recall, the Scotish parliament unanimously addressed the King on its behalf, and the Lord President, Sir Hugh Dalrymple, brother to Lord Stair, and head of the

bench, and the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stuart, head of the bar, jointly drew up memorials to him, able in arrangement information, and argument, defending the rights of the Company on the principles of constitutional and of public law. But in reply, he complained that he had not been consulted in the getting up of the expedition; and when the precise nature and objects of it were explained to him, he caused instructions to be sent to America to exclude the Scots from all access to the English plantations.

On the 26th of July, 1698, the colonists, to the number of about 300 gentlemen of fortune, and about 900 peasants, principally hardy Highlanders, set sail from Leith, amid the praises and prayers and tears of their friends, and in view of a prodigious concourse who had poured down from Edinburgh and the surrounding country to see them depart. Many seamen and soldiers, whose services had been refused because more had offered themselves than could be accommodated or employed, were found hid in the ships, and, when ordered ashore, clung to the ropes and timbers, and implored permission to go without engagement or reward. The fleet coasted round the north of Scotland, called at Madeira, and arrived in two months at Darien, with the loss of only 15 of the 1,200 passengers. The colonists, at the time of their arrival, if they had been actuated by similar ambition and rapacity to the original Spanish invaders, might have ranged from the north of Mexico to the south of Chili with no bad prospect of overturning the whole empire of Spain along the shores of the Pacific; but, preferring the immeasurably better policy of modesty and peace and justice, and determined to hold possession of not a foot of ground which they could not honestly and amicably call their own, they commenced their proceedings by purchasing lands from the native princes, and then sent messages of amity to such Spanish governors as were within their reach. Their destination was Acta, between Portobello and Carthagena, on the part of the coast

opposite the Isle of Pines. They called the territory New Caledonia, the intended capital of it New Edinburgh, and the peninsula or long and high promontory which flanked the harbour and formed a fine site for their fortifications New St. Andrew or Fort St. Andrew. They cut a canal across the low narrow neck of the peninsula, so as to afford a ready communication between the harbour and the ocean; they constructed their defences immediately over this outlet, and planted upon them fifty pieces of cannon; and they then proclaimed the place a free port, and sent home most flattering accounts of their position and hopes. A very lofty mountain soared right up into the rarified air from the side of the harbour opposite the fort; and on this they placed a watch-house, where they could command an immense range of vision to prevent surprise; and thither the Highlanders often repaired to enjoy the cool atmosphere, and to talk of the friends whom they had left behind in their native glens.

The time of the colonists' arrival, the latter part of autumn, was the most temperate and healthful season in that climate, when the air was cool, serene, and refreshing, and the rich and luxuriant soil was no longer deluged with the rains attracted by a vertical sun. But the months which followed, comprising nearly two-thirds of the year, were an almost incessant course of sultry dampness, rain, or general unwholesomeness; the supplies of food which the colony had brought with them were designed more for the voyage than for after use, and became soon exhausted; the gentlemen colonists had been unaccustomed to labour, and could render but little aid to any practical operations; the peasant colonists had spent their lives in cold and mountainous districts, and sank into languor and lassitude beneath the heat of their new abode, and were unequal to the fatigue of clearing the ground, in preparation for the speedy raising of crops; the cargoes of merchandise which had been brought out were ill adapted to the nearest markets, and could not be conveyed from the

colony to any probable purchasers for want of sloops; a vessel which had been despatched from Scotland to the colony with provisions was burnt at sea; the Spaniards, instead of reciprocating the colonists' wishes for amity, attacked and injured their infant settlement, and seized one of their ships which stranded at Carthagena on its way to Barbadoes, and condemned and imprisoned its crew as pirates; and the English colonial governors in the West Indian Islands and on the American Continent proclaimed the settlement at Darien to be an infringement of the peace and alliance with Spain, and would neither make any recognition of it, nor suffer it to be supplied with provisions, or admitted to any negociation; so that, as the result of an utter torrent of disasters, the Scots colonists soon began to be thrown prostrate or swept away by disease, starvation, and despair. At home, too, a most violent remonstrance was presented to King William against them by the ambassador of Spain; and the French King, in order to ingratiate himself with the court of Madrid, offered a squadron to drive them from Darien. At the end of only eight months from the time of their landing, such of the colonists as still survived, and who then were a small and sickly and famishing remnant, re-embarked for Scotland, and bade a mournful adieu to all their enterprise and their hopes; and when their ships approached the harbours of the English plantations in the West Indies and in Continental America, they were either refused access or treacherously admitted and detained. Paterson, the projector, had been the first to enter the fleet at Leith, and he was the last who went on board at Darien.

The directors of the Company at home, ignorant of the misfortunes of the colony, prepared and despatched a second and a third expedition to support and strengthen it; and they also renewed their applications to the King for protection; and maintained, in opposition to statements in the Spanish ambassador's memorial, that a legitimate purchase

of their territory from the native princes, who had still preserved their independence and the rights of possession, was a title far superior to an alleged preoccupancy on the part of the Spaniards, who had been unable to conquer it, and had long tacitly relinquished their claims. But they were as relentlessly opposed as ever by both the King and the English; and felt compelled to proceed as before in the mere might of their own energy, with all their wrongs unacknowledged and unrelaxed.

The second expedition was fully more numerous than the first, but was also more hastily prepared, and less suitably equipped for the voyage. One of its ships was lost at sea; many of the men in the other ships died on board; and the rest arrived at their destination at different times and in broken health, and were dismally appalled when they learned the fate of the twelve hundred who had gone before them. They found the huts burnt and the fortifications demolished; they were poorly provided with all sorts of supplies; they saw no encouragement on the spot, and had no near hope of succour from Europe; and they were consequently overwhelmed on the very day of their landing with the whole pressure of calamity which had accumulated on their predecessors slowly and by degrees. Dissensions of an ecclesiastical nature, too, or more probably a series of struggles between the irreligiousness of most and the religiousness of a few, imparted a sad and peculiar acerbity to their disasters. Four ministers had been sent out with them by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, "to take charge of the souls of the colony, and to erect a presbytery, with a moderator, clerk, and record of proceedings, to appoint ruling elders, deacons, overseers of the manners of the people, and assistants in the exercise of church discipline and government, and to hold regular kirk-sessions;" and these sacred officials appear to have prosecuted their work with so much zeal, and to have provoked by it so much opposition, that

very soon the majority of those who ought to have been their flock became their foes, and precipitated the moral affairs of the colony into confusion and disgrace. "There have abounded, and do still remain among us," said the ministers in a report to the General Assembly, "such abominations, notwithstanding all the means used to restrain and suppress them, as the merest heathens from the light of Nature do abhor,—such as atheistical swearing and cursing, brutish drunkenness, detestable lying and prevaricating, obscene and filthy talking, mocking of godliness, yea, and among too many of the meaner sort, both thieving and pilfering, besides Sabbath-breaking, contempt of all gospel ordinances, &c., which are stumbling to the very Indians, opprobrious to the Christian name, and reproachful to the church and nation to which we belong. Among those that are free of those gross scandalous abominations, the far greater part among us have little of the spiritual heart-exercising sense of religion, and the power of godliness; many are grossly ignorant of the principles of religion; and, among the more knowing, hypocrisy, formality, impenitency, unbelief, indifferency, security, omission of prayer, neglecting the great salvation, slighting of Christ offered in the gospel, and other spiritual sins, do lamentably prevail." A people so wicked, even if they had possessed an ocean of wealth, were on the very plunge to "drown themselves in perdition and destruction;" and, when they were already beggared and immolated by disaster, they can be regarded only as maniacs perpetrating suicide with slow tortures, and going gorily to ruin. Though Darien had been a very paradise for both wellbeing and privilege, its colonists could scarcely expect but to be expelled from it when they gave themselves so terribly up to the working of iniquity.

The third expedition consisted principally of Captain Campbell, a descendant of the families of Athole and Breadalbane, and a company of people from his own estate whom

he had commanded in Flanders; and they sailed in a ship belonging to himself, and arrived at Darien three months after the arrival of the second expedition. They learned on landing that a Spanish force of 1,600 men, who had been brought from the other side of the isthmus, lay encamped at a short distance from the settlement, that a Spanish squadron of eleven ships was daily expected from Carthagena, and that the two forces intended to make a simultaneous attack upon Fort St. Andrew. Captain Campbell, in compliment to his reputation and his birth, was offered the military command of the colony; and in order to disconcert the Spaniards and prevent their two forces from combining, he resolved to attack first; and therefore, on the second day after his arrival, before his presence or his tactics could be suspected by the enemy, he marched at the head of 200 men, assailed the Spanish camp by night, slew many of their troops and put the rest to flight, and returned in triumph to the fort on the fifth day. But he found the Spanish ships before the harbour, their troops landed, and almost all hopes of help or provisions cut off; yet he stood a siege nearly six weeks, till almost all his officers were dead, till his wells were cut off by the approaches of the enemy, and till his ammunition was so far expended, that he was obliged to melt the pewter dishes of the garrison into balls. The colonists then capitulated, and not only obtained the common honours of war, and security for the property of the Company, but, as if they had been conquerors, exacted hostages for performance of the conditions. Captain Campbell alone desired to be excepted from the capitulation, alleging that he was certain the Spaniards could not forgive him the mischief which he so lately had done them; and he made his escape in his vessel, and arrived safely first at New-York and then in Scotland. But those whom he left behind endured a harder fate. They were so weak in health as to be able to get out of harbour only with the generous assistance of their late enemies, the Spaniards; their

ships were so ill-manned and so leaky as tc be compelled, on the voyage, to run into different ports belonging to England and to Spain; one of the ships, a frigate of 60 guns, was lost on the bar of Charleston, another was seized and detained by one of the English colonial governments, and only one, and that a small one, eventually held on its way to Scotland; and of all the many hundreds of strong and brave men who had so short a while before gone to Darien, not more than about thirty escaped death, imprisonment, and shipwreck, and saw once more their native country. Paterson, poor fellow, was both true and diligent to the end, and for a time looked more like a skeleton than a man, and was temporarily overwhelmed by fever and lunacy, and afterwards made vain efforts to retrieve the awful desolation which had come over his enterprise, and then survived many years in Scotland, pitied and respected by multitudes of his countrymen, but unremunerated and unacknowledged by his country's authorities.

When intelligence arrived in Scotland of the abandonment of Darien by the first expedition, the whole nation was struck with consternation and anger; and though somewhat soothed and pacified under the hope of success on the part of the second and the third expeditions, they continued in a state of violent excitement against the obstructors and enemies of their enterprise. The English court was assailed with clamorous cries of indignation; the King was denounced, in pamphlets of the most violent and inflammatory character, as a hypocrite, and as the deceiver of those who had shed their best blood in his cause, and as the author of all the recent calamities which had befallen Scotland; all the public authorities who had embarrassed or opposed the Darien Company were furiously called upon to redress the wrongs they had committed, and to make a formal acknowledgment of the Scotish people's right to New Caledonia; the Jacobites, who had practically the mastery in all the Company's affairs, worked hard to turn the public rage to the account of their

peculiar politics, and to make the massacre of Glenco and the disasters of Darien subservient to the restoration of James; the Commission of the General Assembly appointed special prayers to be offered in the churches for averting the calamities of the nation; the populace gave defiance to a proclamation which was issued by the government against seditious and disorderly persons; and a vast multitude of all the respectable classes of the population subscribed a sort of national petition for a meeting of parliament to vindicate the rights of the nation, and to repair or mitigate the injuries of the Darien sufferers.

The King saw no way of neutralizing the ferment in Scotland, but to throw himself upon the English parliament; and he appealed to them in a style of astuteness and high policy, but found them rather cooled in his cause, and seemingly half-disposed to relent of their former severity to the Scots. The Lords, indeed, by a small majority, voted an address to him, vindicating his opposition to the Darien Company; but the Commons, roused into pretty general resentment of the predilection which he had been showing an all occasions to the Dutch, refused to concur in the address; and, when he recommended a legislative union of the two kingdoms as the fittest measure for reconciling all past disagreements and preventing all future ones, both Houses rejected his proposal. The Scotish parliament, also, soon met, and proved incomparably more intractable than the English. The presbyterian members united with the Jacobites; a majority of the whole legislature appeared in opposition to the King's measures; most violent addresses were presented from the towns and counties; all persons who ventured to dispute or doubt the utility of Darien were reputed public enemies, and the minions of a hostile and corrupt court; a resolution to assert the national right to New Caledonia, and to support the colony as a national affair, was about to be adopted, and was quashed only by an adjournment; and at length the

general ferment rose so high, and the attitude assumed by the great majority became so bold and menacing, that the commissioner, the Duke of Queensberry, prorogued the session. But before the members dispersed, they concurred in a remonstrance to the King against illegal adjournments, as a violation both of the freedom of debate and of the declaration of rights.

When intelligence arrived of the defeat of the second and third expeditions to Darien by the Spaniards, the Scotish populace burst into tumult, proclaimed illuminations for the deliverance of New Caledonia, demolished the windows or insulted the persons of the officers of state, and broke open the prisons to release some persons who had been incarcerated for sedition; and throughout all this conduct, they hurled defiance at the authorities, and were far too powerful to be reached by any punishment. "But"—to quote from Laing, in whose words we shall relate the sequel of this sad story—"when the surrender and final ruin of the settlement were known, the calamitous state of the nation was universally felt. Two hundred thousand pounds were sunk and lost in the different expeditions; an equal sum had been sent abroad during five years of scarcity for the purchase of food; and a general bankruptcy was expected to ensue. Many who had subscribed their whole fortunes were reduced to ruin; and few families had escaped the loss of a relative or friend. Instead of returning with wealth and distinction, the adventurers who survived the mortality of a noxious climate, continued to languish in the Spanish prisons, or were left to starve in the English plantations; and the nation awaked from its dreams of immense wealth, stript of its credit, resources, and trade. Its stock for trade was exhausted; the credit of the nation was ruined; and as every neighbouring kingdom had proved an enemy, hostile to its aggrandisement, all hopes were extinguished of emerging from a poor and contemptible state. The sense of present degradation was exasperated by

the memory of former independence, when its arms were respected, and its alliance solicited by the greatest potentates. Every domestic calamity which the country had sustained, was industriously traced to the removal of the seat of government, the corrupt resort of the nobility to the English court, and the pernicious influence of English councils since the union of the crowns. The most desperate attempts were projected, to sit in parliament by force, or to hold a convention of estates at Perth. On the Duke of Gloucester's death, in whom, as the last child of the Princess Anne, the settlement of the crown determined, the Jacobites proposed to declare the throne vacant, and even the Presbyterians seem to have deliberated whether to separate from England, if no successors were provided on the King's demise. As the scarcity of money, even for the common purposes of circulation, was universally felt, an association was formed against the use of foreign manufactures, or the importation of French wines, to deprive the government of the most productive articles of customs and excise. The Jacobites endeavoured to seduce, or prepared to disband, the army when the parliament met. Every indication threatened a separation of the crowns; but their applications to the court of St. Germains were unexpectedly rejected. Louis, unassured as yet of his grandson's succession to the Spanish monarchy, was unwilling to renounce the partition treaty, and persuaded James, that amidst the dissensions of the two kingdoms, the encouragement given to the Scots might incense the English, from whom alone his restoration could proceed. That bigotted monarch, engrossed with acts of monastic devotion, tamely expected the death of William as a signal to return and reascend the throne.

"As the supplies for the army expired with the year, a session of parliament became indispensable; but the situation of the country never appeared more alarming or formidable to government, and nothing less than the King's pre-

sence was expected to appease the public discontent. His declining health, however, had increased his natural reserve and aversion to factions. Reposing a just confidence in his commissioner, the Duke of Queensberry's address and influence, he endeavoured by a conciliatory declaration to sooth the people, and availed himself dexterously of the loss of Darien to represent the dangerous impolicy of involving his ancient kingdom, alone and unsupported, in a heavy war which she was unable to sustain, for a precarious settlement which it was impossible to preserve in opposition to Spain. Every security was proposed for the preservation of religion, personal liberty, and the freedom of trade. The prisoners wrecked and condemned at Carthagena as pirates, were released at his request; and as the recovery of Darien, the sole bond of union, was no longer expected, the Presbyterians were gradually detached from a party whose violence aimed at the destruction of the state. The members of parliament were the most untractable, as they were mutually pledged by their late addresses. But the boroughs were recently admitted to farm the customs; bribes and pensions were freely dispensed; and the officers of state undertook each a separate progress through the country, not to corrupt the leaders of opposition, but to seduce their adherents.

"When the parliament was opened, the affairs of Darien were too important to be treated with silence or contempt. The honour and independence of the nation remained to be vindicated; and a series of popular and high spirited resolutions were adopted, against which the ministers durst not express their dissent. The addresses, votes, and the whole procedure of the English parliament, against a Company instituted by an act of the Scotish legislature, were declared an officious and undue encroachment on the authority of an independent state; the memorial of the English resident to the senate of Hamburgh was pronounced injurious, false, and contradictory to the laws of nations; the proclamations of

the governors in the English plantations were stigmatised as pernicious to the Company, barbarous and repugnant to the common rights of humanity; the colony of New Caledonia was finally vindicated, as a just and legal settlement, perfectly warranted by the statute and letters-patent which the Company had obtained. On these unanimous resolutions the ministry proposed to address the King. The opposition demanded an act, not only to assert the right, but to support the prosecution of the claim to Darien, without which they asserted that the Company was still insecure, and its adventurers liable to be treated as pirates. But their design was obvious, to involve the King in hostilities with Spain. After a fierce and tumultuous debate, an address was carried by twenty-four votes, to vindicate the honour of the kingdom, and assure the Company of his Majesty's protection. The immunities of the Darien Company were prolonged; the exportation of wool, the importation of foreign manufactures, or of French wines, were prohibited till the fish and manufactures of Scotland were admitted into France; the army was reduced to three thousand men; and by the prudent concessions of William, aided by the intrigues of his ministers, a parliament which had endangered the harmony of the two kingdoms was quietly adjourned. The remainder of the reign passed in sullen discontent at the loss of Darien, the remembrance of which was long preserved with resentment and regret."